

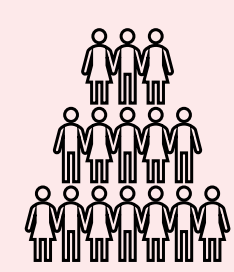
Do menus with informational nudges encourage healthier choices in the workplace?

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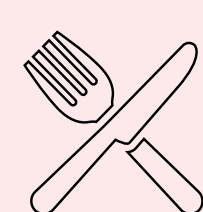
Background



Evidence suggests that 84% of non-communicable disease (NCD) morbidity is caused by environmental exposures. Interventions targeting food environments specifically have demonstrated effectiveness in population-wide improvements in diet and weight status ⁽¹⁾.



Informational nudges on menus have been found to positively influence consumer's dietary choices ^(2,3).



Aramark is one of Ireland's leading foodservice providers, operating across various sectors, serving approximately 250,000 meals daily. This scale presents a unique opportunity to positively impact public health.

Aims & Objectives

The present study aims to examine the impact of a healthy menu with informational nudges versus a standard menu without nudges on consumer choice and daily sales in a workplace canteen.

Research Design

The 'Feed Your Potential' (FYP) initiative introduced 29 healthy FYP recipes to a workplace canteen serving approximately 150 staff daily. Each FYP recipe featured one of four informational nudges: 'Workout Worthy,' 'Mindfulness,' 'The Gut Connection,' and 'Love Mediterranean' which were displayed on menus (Figures 1 & 2).



Figure 1 – Four informational nudges



Figure 2 – 'The Gut Connection' FYP nudge as displayed on the menu

Customer feedback on the FYP menu was collected during the intervention period (September – December 2023) through a digital survey via QR code. The survey assessed several factors including customer's awareness of the informational nudges on the menu, influence of the nudges on meal choice and satisfaction with the FYP menu in terms of variety, taste and value for money. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Daily standard recipe sales were calculated in the pre-intervention period (August – September 2023) and compared to daily healthy FYP recipe sales during the intervention. A paired samples *t*-test was used to calculate mean differences in the sales data between the pre-intervention and intervention periods. Data were analysed with IBM SPSS Statistics v.29.

Results

A total of 73 customer feedback responses were collected (*n*=73). Figure 4 depicts responses to the survey question 'Did the menu nudges and information provided at the time of ordering influence your decision to choose that dish?'

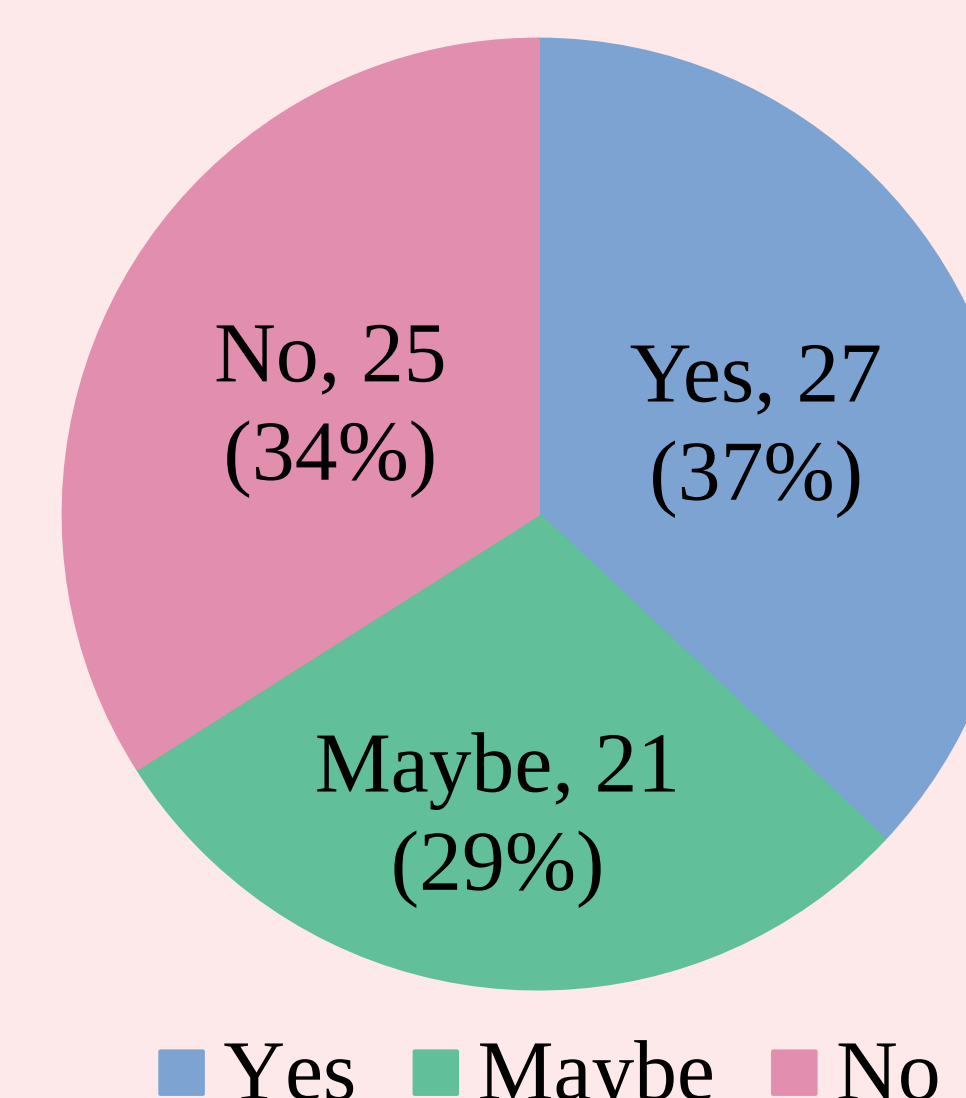


Figure 4 – Influence of the menu nudges on customer's dish choices (*n*=73)

Daily healthy FYP recipe sales during the intervention consistently exceeded Pre-intervention standard menu sales, except for week 2 (Figure 5).

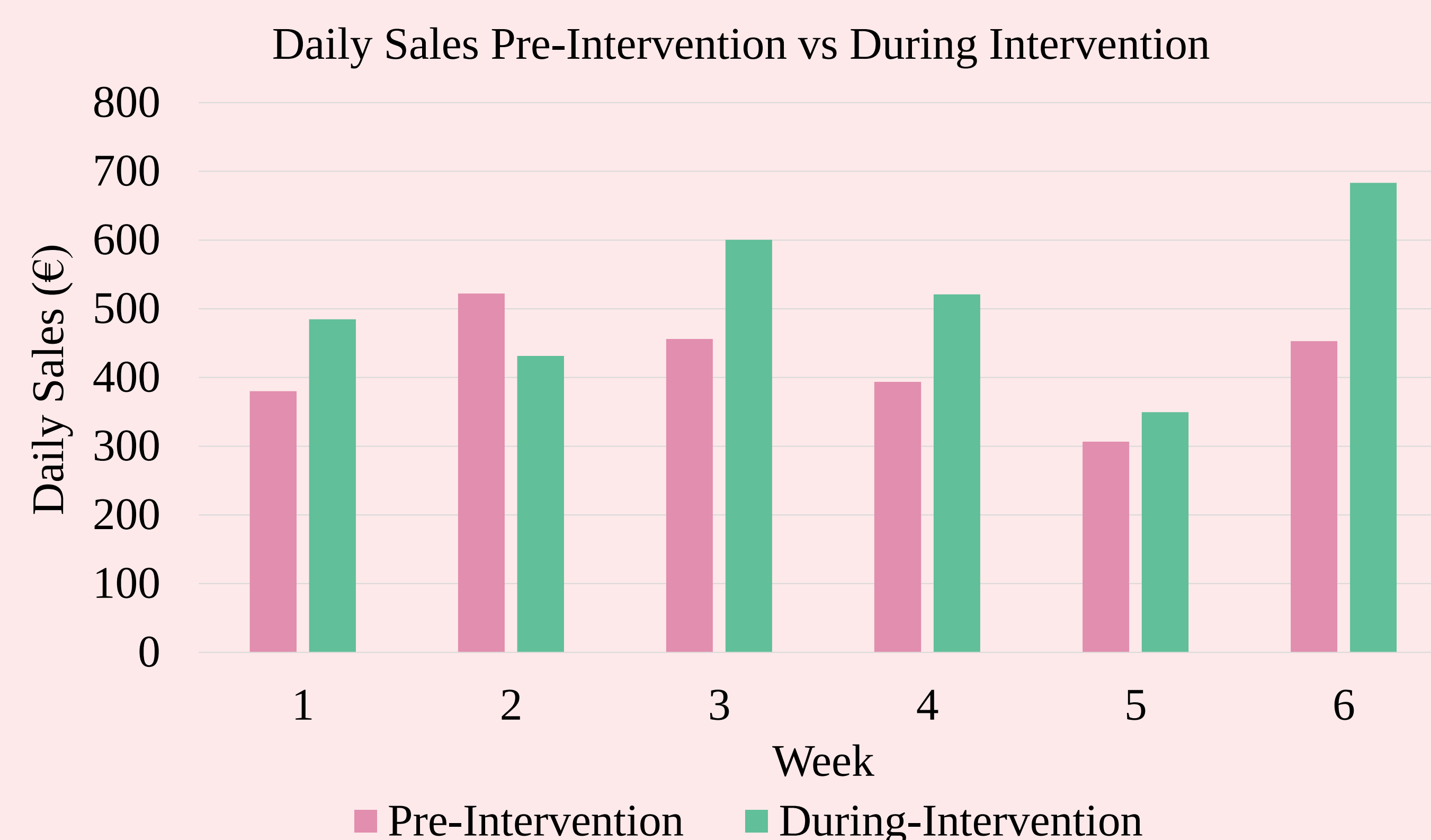


Figure 5 – Total daily sales (€) Pre-intervention (Aug-Sep 2023) vs During Intervention (Sep-Dec 2023)

Mean daily sales increased by 21.7%. Though a trend, this was not statistically significant (*p* = 0.103).

Conclusion

The present study suggests that healthy menus with informational nudges may encourage healthier food choices and increase sales in workplace canteens. However, the non-statistically significant results limit causal conclusions. Longer intervention periods with more explicit pre- and post-intervention comparisons are needed to further elucidate these associations. Aramark continues to work on strategies to provide a healthier food environment for clients and customers.

References

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